

Marriage pattern of the gbandi tribe essay



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The Gbadi tribe settles in Lofa County, they practice both traditional and western marriage. Here in I will discuss the mate selection and marriage pattern of tribal group in Liberia taking the Gbandi tribe as case study.

Marriage, in the Gbandi tribe and any other tribal group in Liberia is socially recognized and approved union between individuals, who commit to one another with the expectation of a stable and lasting intimate relationship. It begins with a ceremony known as a wedding, which formally unites the marriage partners.

In Liberia traditional society, this union is arranged by parents (Arranged marriage). Arranged marriage is the process of the parent selecting mate for their children. Arrange marriage is still practice today by tribal group in Liberia. The both parents of bride and bridegroom decide the marriage. Specific marriage choices and arrangement s are generally Organize by the couples parents and betrothal was traditionally arrange when the each intended partner was still a child or even at birth.

A marital relationship usually involves some kind of contract, either written or specified by tradition, which defines the partners' rights and obligations to each other, to any children they may have, and to their relatives. Both traditional and western marriage In Liberia is certified by the government. In addition to being a personal relationship between two people, marriage is one of society's most important and basic institutions. Marriage and family serve as tools for ensuring social reproduction.

Social reproduction includes providing food, clothing, and shelter for family members; raising and socializing children; and caring for the sick and elderly.

In Liberia societies in which wealth, property, or a hereditary title is to be passed on from one generation to the next, inheritance and the production of legitimate heirs are a prime concern in marriage. Marriage is commonly defined as a partnership between two members of opposite sex known as husband and wife.

The usual roles and responsibilities of the husband and wife include living together, having sexual relations only with one another, sharing economic resources, and being recognized as the parents of their children. Marriage involves an emotional and sexual relationship between particular human beings. At the same time, marriage is an institution that transcends the particular individuals involved in it and unites two families. In Liberian cultures, marriage connects two families in a complicated set of property exchanges involving land, labor, and other resources.

The extended family and society also share an interest in any children the couple may have. Liberia has experienced very rapid socioeconomic development in recent years. This has contributed to a significant improvement in the status of women through expanding education and participation in the modernized sectors of the labor force. Such changes have affected attitudes towards marriage and divorce, patterns of marriage, marital dissolution and remarriage, and the roles and status of women in the family. Marriage perspective of the Gbandi tribe

The Gbandi tribe like other ethnic groups in Liberia marriage is polygamous and patrilocal. The marriage resident in Liberia society is patrilocal. Although specific details of the family structure vary from one ethnic group to another,

Liberia families are generally male dominated. Polygamy is practiced, but its popularity varies according to region, ethnic group, and education. Educated, Christian women living in urban centers, for example, are less likely to marry a man with other wives than other women might be. After marriage, the bride moves in her husband house to live with her extended family.

The Gbandi hold the view that the more wife you get the more respected you are in the society. The older man gets to keep as many wives as possible. A man with many wives increases his economic ability and prestige. His wives and the children they bear become part of the labor force in the traditional peasant farming. Leadership was base on the size of the family. In the tradition wedding beliefs of the Gbandi people like other tribe of Liberia the man is allow to marry as many wives as he can. General governance of the house hold involves male control in theory , but practical day to day domestic management is allocated to the woman.

The first wife become the head wife and holds the greatest status, but the last or recent wife is the favorite; probably because, the recent woman is young and attractive to the man at the time. Once the man married his first wife, mate selection for her husband becomes her responsibility. The man ask his wife to propose marriage to a woman he admire. On the other hand, the sees a beautiful and hard working girl and she propose marriage on behave of her husband. The woman justified that the house work is too much for her and that she needs a help mate.

The tradition Gbandi social order is fundamentally based on polygyny and prior to the influence of western culture, most man aimed for attained

control over several wives, large house hold with many wife and children established the social foundation for man to assume the prestigious status of big house hold and economic basis for controlling substantial productive operation. With these assets, man establishes himself as important member or leader in the community. The Gbandi beliefs in endogamous marriage meaning they marry within their tribe.

Although endogamy is practice by nearly the entire tribal group, they prohibit incest- marry to close relatives. Marriage is prohibited between close relatives and the use of marriage obligations to interlink man and woman are forbidden to marry within their own patrilineage or those of the father and mother relatives. Inter-tribal marriage among the Gbandi people was very rare until now because of the war, the huge migration of the Gbadi had changed their marriage pattern. Exogamous marriage had become a common practice among the Gbandi tribe. Marriage is a process not an event with the bride wealth been paid over the year.

Traditional marriages in the hinterland are arranged. The parent plays a great role selecting mate for their daughter or son. Marriage in the Gbandi tribe as with other tribe in the hinterland is an expensive venture. The suitor must make himself available and acceptable to the woman parent by numerous gifts. The man pays for dowry, and gives gifts and other assistance to the woman parent. The woman remains member of the family of origin, her parent continues to care for her and protect her interest. The woman is bond to respect her husband according to custom. If she violates any of his rule and regulation she can be penalized.

Arranged marriage is the process of the parent selecting mate for their children. Arrange marriage is still practice today by tribal group in Liberia. The both parents of bride and bridegroom decide the marriage. Specific marriage choices and arrangements are generally organized by the couples parents and betrothal was traditionally arranged when the each intended partner was still a child or even at birth. The parents play a major role in choosing marriage partners for their children. Parental influence is greatest when the parents have the greatest stake in which their child marries.

In villages, a marriage may be arranged at any age, but it does not take place until the girl reaches puberty. Usually, girls are prepared for marriage upon graduation from the sandi society- a bush school that prepared them how to take care of home. In some instances, the parents may only arrange marriage, the parent may only introduce their daughter or son to a potential spouse, from that point on it is up to the children to manage the relationship and make the final choice. Marriage in the Gbandi land is regarded as an alliance between two families rather than just between the two individuals.

Arranged marriages are common among the Gbandi tribe in terms of arbitrary looking for a spouse for the man or woman. In the Gbandi culture children are being promised in marriage at the young age. Although arranged marriage still persists in the tribal culture, today, as modernization proceeds, parental influences on marriage continue to decline. Young people who work for wages rather than on the family's land no longer depend as highly on their parents' resources. Marital patterns of tribal groups in Liberia are changing

with many young people are drawn to Western notions of love, romance, and individual choice.

More young people choose their own partner though they often influence by family. For instance, parents and computer matchmaking services help find prospective mates, and the individuals can accept or reject the proposed match. Many mate selection today is done in school, church and other social gathering. Wedding ceremony The ceremony that signifies the beginning of marriage is referring to as wedding. The wedding ceremony in the Gbandi culture is simple and elaborate. The wedding ceremony in the Gbandi tribe like other tribes in Liberia is characterizing by ritual of transition or rite of passage.

This rite signifies the union between the husband and wife or wives. Wedding ceremonies in Liberia is considered as rituals of transition, or rites of passage. These rites occur when people cross boundaries of age or social status. Any social transition, such as the birth of a child or the death of a person, sets off changes in the lives of all those connected with the individual. Weddings and other rites of passage dramatize these changes for all involved and also allow for the expression of emotions brought on by the events.

Weddings announce to the community the union of the individuals marrying and allow the community to express its approval of and support for that union. Although there are many tribe groups in Liberia, they share many similarities in wedding ceremonies. Bright festive colors, song, dance and music are vital elements of many tribal wedding ceremonies. Common to all

wedding in Liberia is the concept of transitioning between childhood and adulthood. Wedding rituals is common features of all tribes in Liberia.

An essential element of all wedding ceremonies in Liberia is the symbolic expression of the union between the individuals marrying. This union may be signified by the exchange of rings, the tying of the bride and groom's garments together, or simply the joining of hands. These rituals emphasize the function of the marriage as the foundation of the family. For instance, in the Gbandi marriage pattern this ritual is symbolically signifies by the tying of kola. The Gbandi like any other tribe in Liberia practice two type of wedding ceremony: the traditional wedding and western wedding which is done in church.

In the tradition marriage ceremony the bride and groom are dress in special tradition African costume and family members and friends gather to grace the ceremony. During the ceremony, brideweath or dowry as known in the Liberia certain is given to the bride relatives. A set price of 48 dollars is usually paid as bride price. During the ceremony people feast and dance, traditional and western dishes, palm wine and other alcoholic beverages are served. People dance to both traditional and western music to grace the ceremony. The turning over of the bride is done by the father, uncle or elder member of the bride family.

Because traditional marriage is regarding as an alliance or union between two families, the bride is receive by the father, uncle or elder member of the groom family. Brideweath Bridewealth or Dowry as refer to in Liberia is the property given to the woman family up on marriage it is accompanied by

some payment call the bride price. The brithwealth payments of substantial values were and still are necessary feature of all recognized marriage in Liberia. This social and economic arrangement is still a fundamental part of the Gbandi marriage pattern and most of the other tribal group in Liberia.

Some of the items given as dowry includes: kola nut, palm oil, cloth, rice, cattle, cutlass and other respected tangible cultural materials. It constitutes a distinct and important form of property. Marriage customs vary, but the payment of a bridal token or dowry is common throughout the country. The groom is expected to give money, property, or service to the family of the bride. The groom's family gives property these items not to the new couple but to the bride's relatives. The payments of bride wealth are high, in the Gbandi custom; practice tends to maintain the authority of fathers over sons.

Because fathers control the resources of the family, sons must keep the favor of their fathers in order to secure the property necessary to obtain a bride. Bride wealth is characterized as compensation to the bride's family for the transfer to the groom's family of the bride's reproductive capacities or her ability to work. The practice is not regarded as the actual sale of a daughter or whether it is a ritual—that is, a symbolic act—rather than an economic transaction. Dowry is not fix but man from wealthy family give more item then man from less fortunate family. Dowry is use to induce the bride parent that their daughter is in good hand.

The dowry must be forfeited by the woman parent in case the women withdraw from the marriage. Divorce Divorce, or dissolution, as it is increasingly becoming known, a legislatively created, judicially administered

process that legally terminates a marriage no longer considered viable by one or both of the spouses and that permits both to remarry. Divorce in Liberia traditional society was rare . Problems of marriage were often discussed with both families and solution found. Often the entire villages join in to help a couple find solutions to their problems and keep the marriage from falling.

Today divorce is common practice in Liberia both in traditional and western marriages. Reason being that because of woman advocate, the traditional belief that women are regarding as property of the man and in case of divorce, they had no share in the family wealth is now disregarded. Another reason is that the divorce law protects all form of marriages. The divorce law of Liberia is base on the traditional fault-based view of divorce—that the “ innocent and injured” spouse should be able to obtain relief (that is, a divorce) from the spouse who has done some wrong.

The divorce law required the plaintiff to prove one of a number of legislatively recognized grounds. Typical grounds have included adultery (almost universally); desertion; habitual drunkenness; conviction of a felony; impotence legislatures from annulment; and, most commonly used by divorcing parties, “ cruel and inhuman treatment. ”

Moreover, the divorce system required that the plaintiff be without fault; a variety of fault-based defenses were therefore recognized. A plaintiff could be denied a divorce if uilty of (1) condonation—that is, forgiving the defendant of the behavior that provided grounds for divorce; (2) recrimination—plaintiffs who had themselves given grounds for divorce were

not entitled to the help of a court (the result of this doctrine was that if both parties wanted a divorce so badly that each provided grounds, neither could terminate the marriage); (3) connivance—if the defendant's misbehavior could in some fashion be laid at the door of the plaintiff, that party was not entitled to a divorce; and (4) collusion—a divorce could not be obtained by a plaintiff who had somehow conspired with the defendant to provide evidence of grounds for divorce.

The Divorce law and ground for divorce is changing the marriage pattern of Liberia because, the state's interest in maintaining stable marriages was assumed, divorce suits could not be treated like other litigation. One spouse, the plaintiff, had to prove grounds even when both spouses wanted the divorce.

Thus, divorce trials were filled with charges and countercharges and generally omitted investigation of the actual viability of the marriage. age gaps between spouses could contribute to marginalization of females and low status of women. Women movement in Liberia and other organization have condemned the traditional marriage age which is far beyond the statutory age of concern (eighteen years) The identification of factors affecting the age at marriage is therefore of paramount interest for multiple reasons. Liberia has experienced very rapid socioeconomic development in recent years. This has contributed to a significant improvement in the status of women through expanding education and participation in the modernized sectors of the labor force.

Such changes have affected attitudes towards marriage and divorce, patterns of marriage, marital dissolution and remarriage, and the roles and status of women in the family. Though polygamous marriage in Liberia is legal, it becoming less common among tribal people because of modern education and Christianity. Polygamy is still practiced (as allowed by customary law), but it has also become less common—partly because of the economic burden and partly because many women in urban areas no longer accept the status of second, third, or fourth wife. Some educated and Christian Gbandi practice monogamous marriage (one man to one wife.). It is widely observed that some educated and Christian of the Gbandi tribe still engage and appreciate polygamous marriage.